

ANATHEMA

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“About Me: In English”

I am possessed by the most powerful
Revolutionary force in the world today:
The Anti-American spirit.

But I am written and I write in English
I too sing America’s shit.

I am inhabited by imperial feelings
Which arise in my mind as images
Of pre-industrial rivers
Or take some technocratic screen-form.

My hopes are these wounds
Are also weapons. But they may be undead
Scholarly jargon.

I am colonized. I dream of decolonizing
Myself and others. The images of the dream
Do not match up. I am the body
And the archive.

A bomb is ticking in my old soul.
And the life of the bomb
Trembles in the hands of my new voice.

I am a professor in the Third World.
What do I know? Libraries in the North
Do not open their doors. I laugh at myself
Imagining what the newer books state.

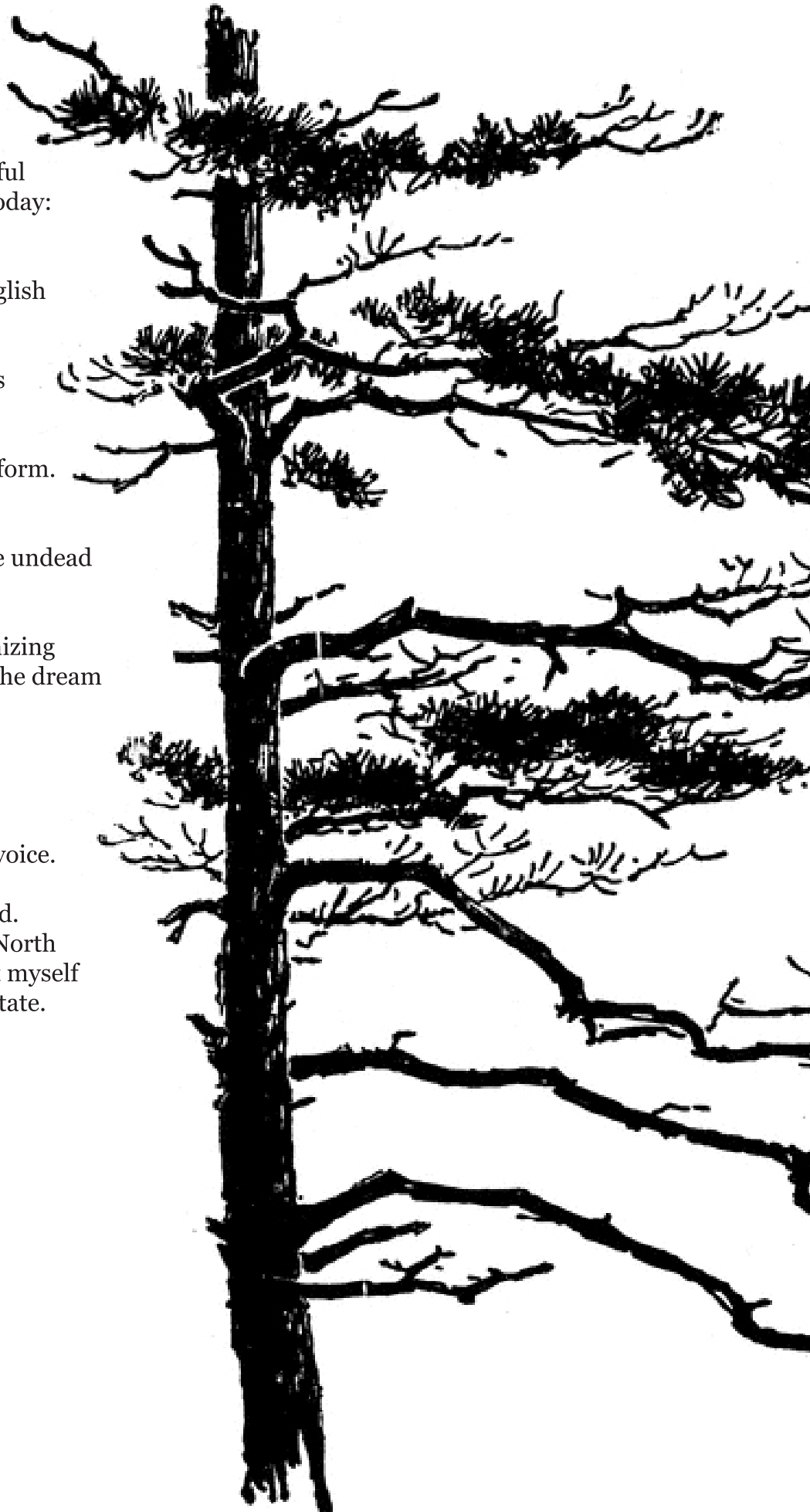
Writing is counter
-insurgent. But the counter
-insurgency
Leaders want our body

Believing writing is freedom.

This is as far as my English goes.



—Heriberto Yépez—



NEW YEAR, NEW ATTITUDE

One year after President Trump’s inauguration, 59 people are still facing up to 60 years in prison for being in or near a demo in which a few windows were smashed. Having dismissed the charges against 129 other people who were still facing trial, the state has now isolated those whom it can deem the most responsible for destructive activities or for being present at a black bloc. Without renewed support for these remaining defendants (regardless of whether they are innocent or guilty), this tried-and-true tactic of isolation and criminalization will probably work to further demonize and discourage people from engaging in similar important practical activities, given that the strategies that underlie and justify such activities — in particular, insurrectionary anarchy — are still severely misunderstood and unsupported, including by many radicals.

The United States has maintained a constant state of war against potentially resistant elements of its own populace since its inception. Originally, this meant protecting itself from potential counter-attacks from

[“New Year...” cont. on pg. 4]

2017: YEAR IN REVIEW

The following piece offers some thoughts on anarchist activity in Philly in 2017. Like any reflection worth its salt, this one is meant to inspire thought, conversation, and ultimately action.

Changes

The most noticeable change in the anarchist space has been its increase in size, alongside a deepening and broadening of anarchist activity in Philly. An ever-changing place, the anarchist space has seen an influx of new people and ideas. More punks, more overlapping with the left, and definitely more anti-fascism. Many of the struggles anarchists engaged in prior to 2017 have escalated, and anarchists have also opened new fronts on which to fight the social war. The anarchist space itself is constantly in flux; with people dropping in and out, relations between people changing, organizations forming and collapsing, new alliances and hostilities emerge. Each change affects our capacity, growing it, limiting it, moving it in different directions. Like all changes, these present both new opportunities and

[“2017...” cont. on pg. 6]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NEW YEAR, NEW ATTITUDE- 1
2017: YEAR IN REVIEW- 1
WHAT WENT DOWN- 2
GUILT- 3

WORLD NEWS- 8
DOW REACHES 26,000...- 10
AGAINST FEARLESSNESS- 11
POEM: “ABOUT ME: IN ENGLISH”- 12

WHAT WENT DOWN

another demand note on January 6th.

New Year's Eve: A march against prisons makes noise outside the Federal Detention Center downtown. "The cold quiet streets filled with the reverberation of drums and the clanging of pots and pans, and the walls were decorated with posters, stickers, and tags against imprisonment."

January 2: Around 20 ATMs are sabotaged in Portland in solidarity with Philly comrades. "Tonight we borrowed from our comrades in Philly and went out to jam up some bank ATMs. One could not find a better representative of the capitalist machine we seek to dismantle than the very cog which keeps the whole thing afloat, for without banks the State would have no way of determining "value" and stacking debt onto the backs of the impoverished while enriching the lucky few ad nauseam."

Early January: Graffiti against gentrification and progress in West Philly.

Early January: Truck owned by a local fascist has tire slashed outside his home in Northeast Philly.

Mid-January: At least 5 symbols of Christopher Columbus are vandalized in New Jersey, including in Camden, NJ, Pennsauken, NJ, Atlantic County, NJ and Garfield, NJ. "Fuck your new world" ★



Late December: Over 50 ATM card slots are sabotaged. "This time of year has prime weather for looking unassuming and concealing your identity while carrying out all kinds of illegal activities, so don't be afraid to try this at home!"

December 23: Citizens Bank branch located at 8616 Germantown Avenue was robbed at 11:30 a.m. The individual entered the bank, approached the counter, brandished a gun, and verbally demanded money from a teller.

December 24: An individual approached the ATM outside the George Smith Towing Company along the 3100 block of South 61st Street with a pry bar to gain access to the cash machine. After taking approximately \$5,000 the suspect left the area in an unknown direction.

December 26: Between 700 and 1000 teens congregate in the Cherry Hill mall food court, leading to heavy policing and 5 arrests.

December 30: Fascists from Keystone United/KSS and Atlantic City Skinheads are chased out of a punk show, 3 of the fascists go to the hospital, 1 with a broken arm.

December 29: An individual entered the Citizens Bank branch located at 5500 Germantown Avenue, approached a teller and presented a demand note. After obtaining an undisclosed amount of cash, they left the area of the bank on foot in an unknown direction. The same person allegedly robbed the same bank with

AGAINST FEARLESSNESS

As anarchists, we have so much to fear: failure, success, uncertainty, isolation, police, prison, come to mind. And yet discussing and embracing fear is often seen as taboo among anarchists. This taboo has limited us. When we deny fear, we deny a part of ourselves, and we put ourselves blindly in danger. We embrace a patriarchal idea when we misunderstand fear as a weakness while also stunting our potential to grow in trying situations. Our association of fear with weakness overlooks the courageousness of which we are capable.

Fear is a feeling that is an important part of each of us. As anarchists, we try to break from the patriarchal domestication process we are put through, a process that suppresses the emotions that move through us. This break means having to confront ourselves in our entirety, our fears included. We cannot learn to free ourselves when we are unwilling to even face ourselves. Acknowledging our fears is part of acknowledging ourselves, whether individually or collectively.

Patriarchal understandings of fear tell us it's useless, weak, cowardly. Actually, fear is useful, allowing us to sense danger and assess risk. Like all feelings, experiencing fear is neither weak nor strong, simply a measure of any one person's sensitivity to a situation as it relates to their own experience. The notion that simply being scared is cowardly is absurd; a coward is someone who lacks courage, and courage is our ability to do something that frightens us. These misunderstandings around fear keep us firmly rooted in patriarchal notions of what fear and courage mean.

Fear is useful; it helps us understand danger. We can respect our fear as we respect a scout, a guide to help us decide how to move forward in a tumultuous situation. A scout announcing an obstacle is a helpful reminder that we cannot simply rush blindly into a situation without consequence; fear is the same. To understand danger and fear is not the same as letting it stop us. In fact, understanding the dangers fear points out to us will only help us navigate it. When we are fearless (or pretend to be), we close the possibility of accurately assessing the situations we find ourselves in.

Fearlessness is stagnancy; there's no growth among the fearless. Fearlessness is a dead end. When we are scared, we can ask ourselves why and learn from it. If we refuse to admit we are scared, we can gain nothing from the emotion moving through us. What a waste.

Courage is not an inability to experience the discomforts of fear; it is the strength to feel fear and overcome it. Instead of aiming to be fearless, we can cultivate our courage. A courageous person is just as afraid as anyone, yet instead of denying their feelings they confront them, move through them, and act accordingly. Courage leaves us open to be both sensitive enough to understand danger and brave enough to navigate it. Let's leave fearlessness behind and move through what frightens us toward courage.

DOW REACHES 26,000 AS GLOBAL CAPITAL LURCHES ONWARDS

Our corporate overlords continued to celebrate the triumph of Trump-era capitalism as the Dow Jones Industrial Average soared to 26,000 in mid-January for the first time, with U.S. stocks having returned an impressive 20% over the past year. But despite what some are lauding as the most coordinated level of global economic growth since the 1960s, i.e. the exciting fact that no countries are currently in a recession, these events do not signal a renewed geopolitical leadership for America, nor a significant recovery for capitalism.

Global capitalism has been struggling since the 1970s to continue expanding at a rate necessary for its survival. One of the only ways in which the U.S. has been able to achieve the sluggish expansion it has had is by continually reducing its labor force. While employment rates have been praised as high over the past year, the proportion of people per population who are employed remains far lower than it was ten or more years ago.

While historically capitalism has expanded in part by subsuming more people into its work force, increasing the work force at this time is essentially a liability for postindustrial countries like the U.S. This is one of the reasons for Trump's flagrant attempts to deport non-white immigrants and aggressively secure the borders — taking in new workers is no longer profitable in the aggregate. We have seen this attempted ethnic cleansing put into motion this month

as the Trump administration announced the deportation of 200,000 Salvadorans.

In reality, the U.S. economy remains perilously situated. Economist James Galbraith noted in a recent interview that the current markets are driven by consumers, who depend on access to debt and loans. The inherent limitations on individuals' willingness to access credit will eventually end this era of relative growth. Galbraith also maintains that the current stock market growth is not happening because corporations benefiting from the tax cut are investing the money and thus growing the economy, as advertised, but rather because they're using the money to buy back their own stocks.

Moreover, some analysts have predicted a market crash will happen soon that will be the worst in our lifetimes. "Legendary investor" Jim Rogers warned six months ago that the crash that's due will be catastrophically worse than the 2008 recession, as the U.S.'s debt has worsened, and China — which was able to spend money in 2008 to resuscitate the global economy — is now also in debt. Rogers predicts that whole governments will fail as a consequence, as Iceland did in 2008.

New U.S. policies like the most recent tax cut are even more blatantly exacerbating the gaping divide between the incredibly rich and miserably poor in order to stave off collapse. In this climate, some anarchists are advocating renewed attention to class war, from finding ways to make individuals who profit from the system feel uncomfortable, to straight up robbing the rich in order to forcibly redistribute the wealth they've expropriated. ★



GUILT

"Autonomous and moral are mutually exclusive terms."

Born of morality, imposed by leaders, and accepted by those weak of will, guilt is a weak link in our community — or perhaps it is the lynch-pin of it.

There are a great deal of oppressive impositions that loom over the head of any society. Communities tend to not organize themselves on the basis of voluntary association, or disassociation, to avoid schisms and maintain the niceties that reinforce the ruling order handed down by civilization. We can and do find strength in who we associate with, but those artificial ideas of community — lumping lives together through proximity — are less often voluntary associations and more often an attack on the will to life, bending our will toward mere survival. The resulting tendency to remedy conflict and transgression through frameworks involving justice is, likewise, a moral strategy coming from a weaker, reactionary standpoint.

Aggressive, active negations, and going on the offensive instead have the potential to empower us and develop a freer outlook as we explore what it's like to throw off the moral compass indoctrinated in us since early childhood. Perhaps a semantic exercise for some, the removal of obstacles to our autonomy for the sake of them being obstacles, rather than for specific transgressions, is powerful. That is to say, because they exist to hinder our pursuit of life, and not because of particular instances in which they did something bad we don't like, they should be destroyed — striking at the root rather than some foul blossom. Additionally, this means we don't rely on movement building or other populisms where we change ourselves for others, but instead find strength in one's self to act.

Guilt, on the other hand, which is pushed upon us by religious and political leaders — the most relevant to our circles being community leaders — limits one's fight against those structures that harm life, for the sake of caring for every attempt at survival, even among those that we have no personal connection to or even political affinity with. It is handed down from a larger society that, though less governed by any church than before, has absorbed morality into its framework for the sake of better maintaining control of its populace. Even among anarchists we still hear discussions framed in terms of morality, doing the right thing, and

attempting to vanquish evil.

We have long been taught to feel guilty for not succeeding in the capitalist hierarchies with the odds stacked against us, and for not aspiring to success when we have some odds in our favor. Nearly half of American workers are said to feel guilty for taking time off, which is higher among younger generations, and has been consistently on the rise. We feel guilted into making "ethical purchases." We have witnessed in recent months how the patriarchal overtones of this society's domination contribute to severe feelings of guilt among survivors of sexual assault. And when we fight back, we are judged as guilty and left to rot in a prison until we develop that sense of guilt, or else rot in a tomb if we refuse to stop fighting.

The list goes on, but guilt ultimately either prevents those with more privilege from acting for fear of offending or further ostracizing others, or leads us to serve "under-served" communities. Acting on that guilt is called charity, and is contrary to notions of solidarity, an anarchist principle that favors supporting or acting in kind with those waging a fight that we also want, a fight more likely to empower marginalized populations by weakening or eliminating those controls that prevent liberation.

"To enable a sanctuary to be set up a sanctuary has got to be destroyed."

And so we must destroy sanctuaries of authority so that we may regain authority over our own lives. The tendency to do otherwise — to hopelessly attempt to provide security while very much sacrificing the potential for liberty — is to restrict the will to life and bend to conditions of legality. And when we form organizations of this type, these legal organizations (non-profits, social services, and more informal charities), we are constructing weapons against fighting and favoring principles "hostile to life."

We can't limit our capacity to fight and expect someone else to do it, nor can we save everyone — especially in an exponentially overpopulated world undergoing a sixth great extinction — but we can try to make those who prop up the institutions that limit us, that limit life, the first to go. ★





[“New Year...” cont. from pg. 1]

Native people whose land the government had stolen and from rebellions by African slaves whose labor it was expropriating. Today, the U.S. executes over one thousand of its most vulnerable people in the streets each year, locks up millions of its historically oppressed populations, continues to militarize its police forces, has developed ever-present technological surveillance to cover gaps in policing, has forced resistance movements to move from armed struggle to peaceful protest, and, most recently, in the case of J20, is now threatening to make organizing a protest a serious criminal offense.

It should be obvious by now that the state will not just wither away. Confronted by the mass movements and counter-institutions that many radicals have hoped to create, the state will adapt the movement’s demands into something that suits its own interests, decimating the rest. Or it will just ignore it.

What would it take, then, to bring down the state?

This question is so hypothetical at this point of unprecedented state strength, both in the U.S. and globally. But it is still worth asking, if only because it points us in a direction of dignity rather than resignation.

We know that threats of violence to the state have consistently helped win whatever “reforms” have been claimed by nonviolent movements. Violence in the form of anonymous, informal groupings of people, who attack enemies’ weak points rather than confronting the enemy head-on, has particular advantages. Groups of friends have relative loyalty to one another and are very hard to infiltrate. The struggle can’t be undermined by taking out leaders, because the people involved each have their own ideas and desires, know how to do most things, and will keep taking initiative without being told what to do. Unofficial team-ups

don’t provide any public information that would help the state map out who’s responsible for resistance struggles and what those struggles are capable of. Having a plan of attack, rather than fighting the police or other enemies face-to-face, significantly minimizes the potential for people to get caught.

Leftist handwringers tend to prioritize bringing people into a movement, which for them involves creating formal organizations so that people can join them (although it’s not clear that many do). Their main objection to informal organizing and attack is that it can’t provide a way for people to join it and grow the movement.

Struggles broaden and deepen in many ways, though — just not usually in the ways that leftists imagine they will. After all these years, leftists still care deeply about managing political struggles so that the maximum number of people will join their mailing list, when this strategy has never worked in the absence of a number of other factors. All the while, insurrectionary struggles — struggles that don’t aim demands at those in power and

Less visible, and purposely hidden, it is also present in offices, warehouses and workshops throughout Belgium. Many companies are participating in the current war effort, producing the necessary equipment for the conflicts here and elsewhere, arming cops and soldiers, equipping prisons and aircraft carriers, enabling the surveillance of the streets of Brussels and the devastation of Aleppo. These companies do not make the headlines, they don’t attract the attention of the passer-by in the streets and they don’t have advertising campaigns, as they are probably not very inclined towards boasting about making money from corpses. Yet they exist and in large numbers. According to Roland Teheux, head of Agoria (Belgian federation of tech companies) in the aerospace, space, security and defense sectors, there are 92 companies that are currently active with a combined annual turnover of 3.6 billion Euros. One can get an idea of the extent of these sectors by visiting the database website of the ‘Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security’ (GRIP), which lists 75 arms companies in Belgium.

We can of course feel totally helpless in the face of these wars on the other side of the world and state terrorism at home and abroad. However, the month of September 2017 was not very pleasant for the Belgian arms industry. According to the media, three companies in this sector seem to have been targeted by determined arsonists. On the night of September 25th, 5000 square meters of warehouse space belonging to the Varec company in Mechelen went up in smoke, requiring the intervention of firefighters from Mechelen, Duffel, Berlaar, Lier and Nijlen. If the fire had not been formally described as intentional by the prosecutor’s office, it would not have been noted that there were two distinct locations from which the fire spread. According to the company itself, Varec is ‘a world-renowned

manufacturer of rubber-like metal parts and synthetic components for military vehicles’. It seems that the damage done was significant, for the firefighters had to work until the morning of the next day to control the fire. Two days later, it was the Teksam Company in Genk’s turn to see its premises turn into a bonfire. Here too, the damage was enormous: workshops and offices damaged by fire, orders ready to be shipped totally destroyed, 40 employees left without jobs...the fire seems to have been started by malicious people: gas cylinders were found at the site. Teksam Company designs and manufactures telescopic masts for armies around the world. The next day at 8AM in Herstal, a fire on the roof of a building belonging to Forges de Zeebrugge was about to take hold. Workers, apparently warned by the appearance of thick smoke, discovered a device consisting of gas cylinders attached to each other and connected to a fuse. The device was defused by army explosives experts. Zeebrugge Forges, a subsidiary of the Thales Group, manufacture bombs, ammunition and missiles for aircraft and helicopter gunships.

These attacks create a breach in the atmosphere of silent complicity, the submissive acceptance of a so-called morbid fatality in the face of these wars and the control of our lives that is intensifying daily. They show that the omnipotence of the military is not infallible. They also show that a struggle against the war of power and against social peace is not limited to empty words or symbolic actions, petitions or actions of political pressure, that it is possible to strike blows where they do not expect them, by oneself, and without waiting.



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WORLD NEWS

The French state has decided to abandon its plans to build a new airport outside the city of Nantes. This victory for the squatters and farmers occupying the land known as the ZAD concludes a struggle against the airport construction plan that started over ten years ago.

The Justice Department has dropped all charges against 129 of the remaining J20 defendants, leaving 59 still facing felony charges. Nothing is finished; we cannot let ourselves be divided into “good” and “bad” protesters.



Belgium: Analysis of the Wave of Arson Attacks Against the Arms Industry via Insurrection News

In Europe, wars seem to belong to a distant past. The images of trenches, concentration camps, aerial bombardments of European capitals and the landings on the Fench coast come out of the archives from time to time on the occasion of a hypocritical commemoration and everyone thinks that times have been good. Yet our current era is characterized by the omnipresence of warlike logic. Think of the ‘interventions’ in Iraq and Syria, conflicts that the members of the international coalition are largely responsible for. But the war is also here, very visible by the khaki uniforms that patrol our streets or on the dull and tired faces of refugees who have been transported to Europe by the shock wave of distant bombing. It is sometimes found in the eruption of a scandal, such as when everybody pretends to notice that the Wallonia Region (in southern Belgium) sells weapons to Saudi Arabia...



instead set about the practical task of attacking things they don’t want to exist — are spreading in unpredictable, uncontrollable ways. We don’t always immediately perceive these ways as broadening or growing a movement, since strategies for growing a movement revolve around assumptions of control and predictability on the part of those who manage them.

Insurrectionary struggle often spreads without face-to-face interactions, through propaganda, but also through the proliferation of the tactics themselves. Other people see that something is possible and take it up all the time — this can be seen with major rebellions like the anti-police riots that spread across the country a few years ago, or with something small like graffiti and petty vandalism in a particular neighborhood. Maybe leftists don’t like this strategy as much because it’s harder to manage. But getting unmanageable is the point.

Despite hundreds of years of brutal violence that have beat the spirit and memory of rebellion out of most of us and formed a submissive people, some individuals are still drawn to insurgent struggle. Some people still attack the state, whether out of self-defense or revenge, or from disloyalty to their relative positions of privilege, or some combination of the above. Those people have very few sources of support. Even a relatively privileged person will have to endure years, possibly decades, in prison if they’re caught sabotaging something the state or a corporation likes. More vulnerable people with fewer resources will endure even worse.

The consequently weak state of insurgency today does not change the fact that its strategies and tactics are the only thing that has any potential to take down the oppressions we all despise. Those who spend all their time trying to bandage the gaping wounds of this society and devoting their support to people with whom they have neither a prior friendship nor political affinities are helping perpetuate those present weaknesses.

Though there is much to critique and change about insurrectionary scenes today, insurrectionary anarchy and other insurgent activities are weak today not because the strategy is weak, but because the state has set

about crushing it and radicals have chosen other, more pacified activities. Direct support for struggles that are going on the offensive is just as necessary today as it has ever been — regardless of whether those struggles help build or grow anything. We have to show that we can sustain and provide for ourselves before people will want to team up with us (if that’s our goal, which it doesn’t need to be). Encouraging people to organize through formal organizations, and by doing support work between people who don’t know or may not like each other and are just doing things out of a sense of guilt or responsibility, doesn’t make sense to prioritize if you have an eye on destroying the root causes of oppression. Attempting to build a collectivity that has the potential to be some kind of base for attack needs to start from people knowing and trusting each other.

For those of us who struggle with feelings of responsibility to other people in less fortunate social positions than us, it’s important to recognize that we can only care for so many people. It is impossible to not make choices about whom we support. For anarchists, prioritizing caring for people who are involved in high-risk activities with few resources, which may sometimes just mean your friends, is one of the most crucial ways to keep the idea of freedom alive. ★





[“2017...” cont. from pg. 1]

new challenges. How can we move beyond increasing our numbers to seeing our activity flourish? What would it mean to qualitatively assess the growth we’re experiencing?

Other aspects of the anarchist space have remained the same. We have yet to open large public conflictual spaces within big marches and protests. Theoretical conversation and deepening stays confined within one-on-one conversations and small groups. Assemblies and larger discussions continue to feel like spaces where many people show up with the expectation of being told what to do, of finding a group to join, of coming to a decision all together about what should be done, instead of being spaces where people arrive with their own initiative. As always, there is room to improve; this is not something we should shy away from.

The shift toward anti-fascism, fighting the right, and opposing Trump has affected local social conflict in interesting ways. Longtime anti-fascists expressed both bitterness and pleasure to see large sections of the population finally take seriously the dangers the far-right poses, a danger they have been fighting for years. One unfortunate effect of this shift towards anti-fascism has been a shift away from black revolts against policing and from anti-colonial struggles, as well as a shift away from insurrectionary interventions among anarchists. The rise of anti-fascism has birthed a curious and misguided belief among the mainstream that anarchists and anti-fascists are the same thing. What would it

mean to understand the fight against fascism as part of a holistic struggle against all domination? How can we use this supportive climate to move forward without playing down our radical politics for the masses? How can we reimagine anti-fascism as proactive and offensive rather than reactive and defensive?

Strengths

Small and large autonomous actions proliferated! Last year saw consistent anarchist propaganda in the forms of graffiti, posters, and stickers in multiple neighborhoods, mostly in West and South Philly. A practice of attacks and sabotage against symbols and mechanisms of authority have become normal. The attack against a Philly police substation and several cop cars outside it was a notable escalation; Philly police property has not been successfully attacked in such a way, to our knowledge, for many years. The struggle against gentrification has continued without devolving into liberal activism, appearing mostly as targeted vandalism both in and out of demonstrations. How can this practice of attack be sharpened and expanded? What experiments in coordination, escalation, and diffusion can we try in 2018?

The May Day demo and the J20 march on South St were a dramatic escalation of anarchist street presence, creating short-lived spaces where people could freely express their rage against capital and the state without the threat of immediate arrest. This model of demonstrations, planned and promoted out of sight, have the potential to continue creating inviting space

to experiment with attack on a scale impossible for a single affinity group to pull off alone. How can we keep creating space to collectively build our confidence and capacity to attack together in the year to come? How can we break out of the anarchist calendar and create moments of collective rage outside of a few anarchist holidays every year?

Support for local and national J20 defendants took many forms. The punk scene began to take political action in a way that hadn’t been seen in years. Lots of benefit shows and an all-day barbecue were organized. Meals, a rally, and benefit shows created a number of opportunities for the punk scene and the anarchist space to intermingle and draw new lines of solidarity.

Speaking of punk, at least twice in 2017 fascists were fought in or around punk shows. This return to the anti-authoritarian roots of the subculture is an example that can be carried over to other scenes and subcultures. How can we intensify the subversive potential of diy music, graffiti scenes, drug culture, or other alternative spaces? What would it look to begin transforming scenes and subcultures into rebellious countercultures?

The murder of anti-fascist protester Heather Heyer in Charlottesville, VA and nationwide debates around public monuments this summer led to a renewed interest in removing the monuments to former police chief and mayor Frank Rizzo. Public rallies and petitions pressured the city government to remove the Rizzo statue in Center City. At the same time, people vandalized the statue and mural, hung an anti-Rizzo banner, and put up posters depicting the statue being torn down. These actions worked to immediately discredit and attack the symbols of racism, and to pressure politicians to take action. This instance of national anti-confederate momentum being directed at symbols of racism and homophobia locally is an interesting example of adapting trends to fit our own contexts and desires. We might do well to learn from this and imagine ways to funnel popular sentiment in anti-authoritarian directions in the new year.

These practices, and the consistent rhythm they have created in the city and the anarchist space, are an accomplishment in themselves. What are ways to further spread and deepen these rebellious activities? What new ones can we imagine and experiment with?

Critiques

Anarchists have not yet been able to create large confrontational demonstrations. We have had little

success with this here since at least before the Occupy movement, and this was also notable in 2017. In March, the MAGA march was confronted by the largest black bloc seen on the east coast in years, yet the opposition was mostly symbolic; the cops ultimately shut down the MAGA march. The Black Resistance march in February, which did clash with the police and vandalized a bank, led to arrests and injuries. Reports and many discussions of the march framed the protesters as passive victims, and the number of arrests and injuries left many feeling less empowered than they started. Attempts to create participatory confrontations were made during the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) conference in October, but fell flat. The history of vicious police repression and Quaker pacifism in Philly have certainly contributed to this failure, yet it is up to us to create the activity we want to see.

Anti-fascist organizing has faced some challenges despite its sudden increase in popularity, as new methods are now needed. The wave of new people means that security and communication practices must be reviewed and tightened up.

When police killed David Jones in June, the response by anarchists was remarkably tame. The possibility of expressing an explicitly anti-cop position in solidarity with those who knew David never became a reality. David’s name was painted around the city, but it was the activists who made the most noise around David Jones’ death, asking for truth, justice, and at times community control of the police. This is not a call to dismiss the grief and suffering of those close to David whose ideas we disagree with, rather a suggestion to be honest about our politics and to act on them when police killings happen.

Our networks outside of the city seem to be lacking. Our location along the east coast means we could communicate and coordinate with anarchists in Baltimore, NYC, DC, Delaware and New Jersey. These types of connections could have made responding to the Vaughn prison revolt in February feel more possible. Additionally, international solidarity has not seemed like a priority for anarchists here this past year.

Lastly, and most straightforwardly, anarchists could have done a better job of presenting anarchy as a viable and desirable alternative to Trump and democracy. Despite a spike in activity by anarchists, many people still do not understand why anarchy is so appealing to us. We cannot look to the media to tell our potential accomplices and comrades why we do what we do. Only we can explain ourselves and what we fight for. ★